

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING CURRICULUM

Statement of Purpose

Every teacher is a teacher of language arts. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are tools of communication; the application of these tools is the common thread that unifies the school program. The clear, correct, imaginative and effective use of language is fundamental. The nature of the language arts requires a course of study that recognizes two basic elements:

1. The "inter relatedness" of the language arts: Listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught in relation to one another and not as isolated learning activities. For example, activities in listening and observing are seen as developing skills and providing content for reading and writing experiences. Reading and spelling skills are taught to reinforce one another. Instruction in decoding, therefore, helps children recognize visual, phonetic and structural elements which in turn enables children to encode words correctly. An inter-related curriculum enhances skill development in the language arts.
2. The "integrated program": This aspect of the program provides for the application of the language arts in other curriculum areas. A class newspaper based on colonial times, researching a social studies theme, working on a science fair project, organizing and following directions to execute an art project, researching and writing biographical accounts for Black History Month are examples of synthesizing experiences that depend on language facility. An integrated curriculum not only enhances skill development in the language arts

but it enables student's to handle content area subjects with greater ease and deeper understanding.

The program is based on recognizing developmental needs, interests and capabilities of children. The following principles are fundamental in this student-oriented curriculum:

1. Language is the means of expressing thoughts. Language assignments in listening, writing, reading and oral reporting are "thinking" assignments.
2. Effective learning activities draw on experiences, perceptions, and interests of students. Meaningful learning results in motivated and independent learners.
3. Learning by doing is the emphasis in the language arts classroom. Active participation in the use of language develops fluency. Children are both the receivers and producers of language. Experimenting with language results in mastering the form and function of language.
4. An articulated, sequential program is essential. A stated scope and sequence of language arts skills provides continuity and structure to the school program, K-Grade Six. The skills designated for each level are a minimum performance objective. Students are encouraged to expand their capabilities beyond minimum expectations. Consideration is made for differing levels and abilities.
5. Students' mastery of reading skills is managed and monitored by means of Macmillan McGraw-Hill Reading Assessment Program designated for each level.

Individual skill needs are identified and specific needs are addressed through program adjustments (accelerated, remedial, etc.).

6. Language arts skills are developed in a spiraling fashion. As a student makes forward progress on the skill continuum, skills are taught, taught again, and refined to more sophisticated levels. Language arts skills, for the most part, are introduced in K and or *Grade One* and are developed at more advanced levels as the student progresses through the program.

The program strives to expose students to a wide range of language experiences so that they can derive pleasure from reading, articulate their views verbally and be equipped to meet the instructional demands of a middle school curriculum. The easy manipulation of words and the sense of excitement in their use will enable students to absorb the world around them and respond to its needs with understanding and maturity.

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